

PART ONE

ART : WORK

ON

WINNIPEG MANITOBA

CANADA

Published in Twelve Parts



BY
WILLIAM H. FERRE

1920



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Winnipeg, Manitoba,
Canada



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By

WILLIAM H. CARRE

1900

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FORT GARRY GATE.

Historical Sketch of Winnipeg

and

A Synopsis of the Civil History of the Red River Settlement.

WINNIPEG, the capital of the Province of Manitoba, illustrates in a striking degree the wonderful development that has attended the energetic enterprise of the people in all parts of the western half of the American continent. The first quarter century of the city's existence has just closed, yet thus early in its history it has attained the position of third rank among the commercial cities of the Dominion of Canada, and is in every respect a modern metropolis, cos-





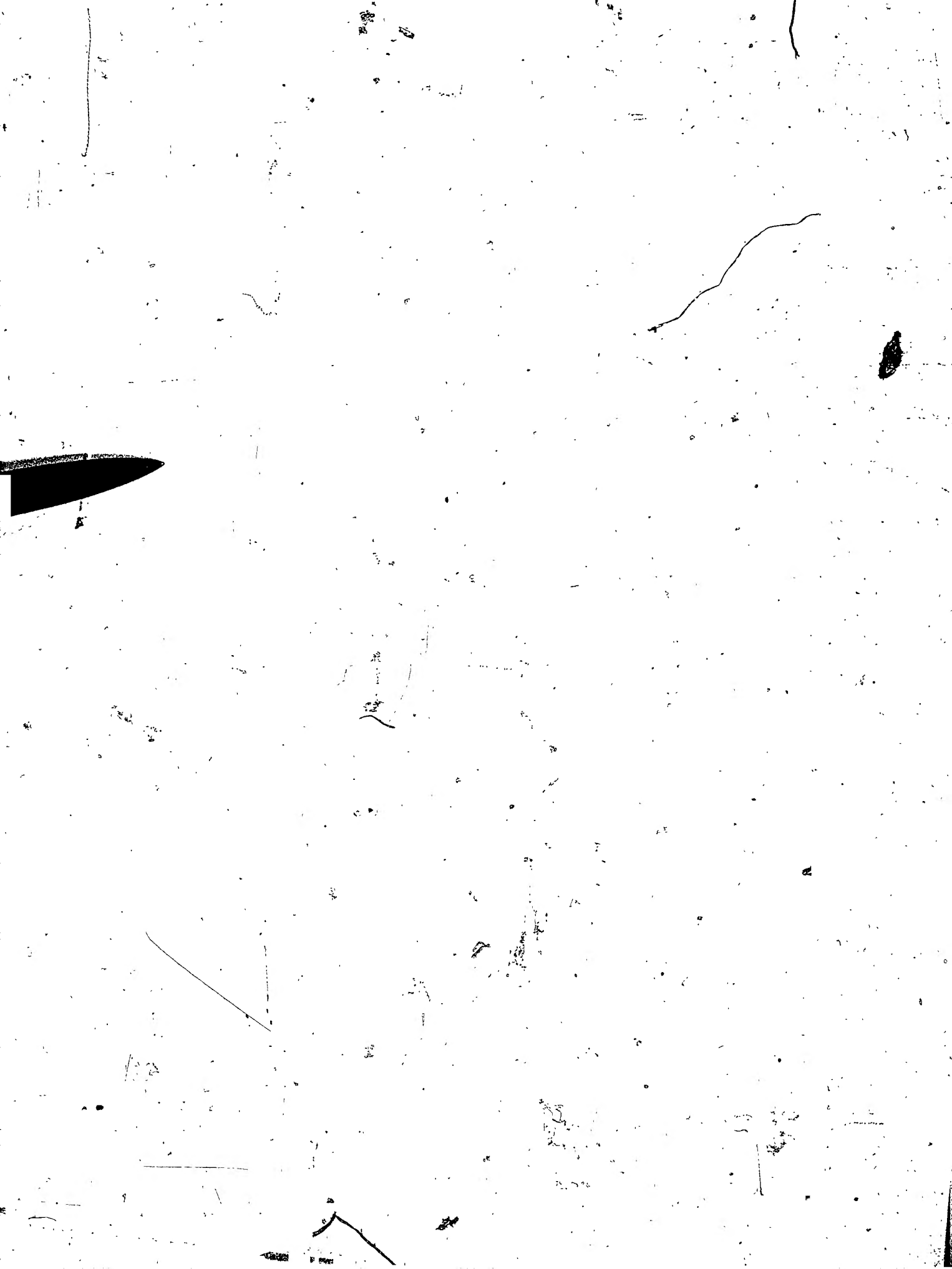
ASSINIBOINE RIVER—MARYLAND BRIDGE





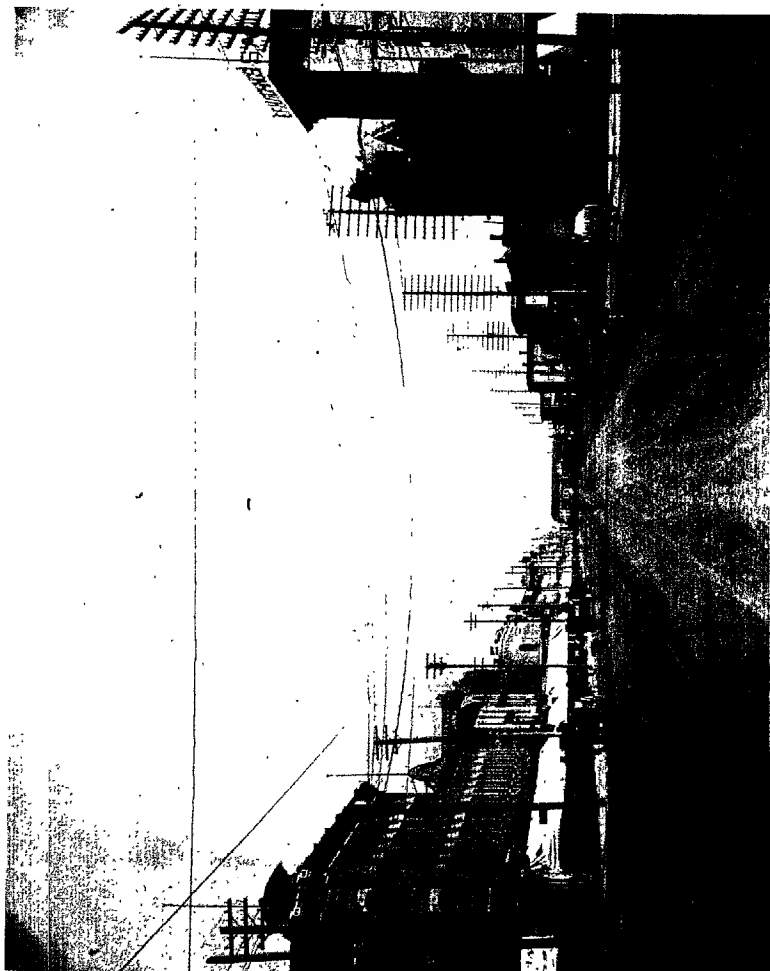
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ELM PARK



MAIN STREET—NORTH FROM MARKET



CENTRAL PARK



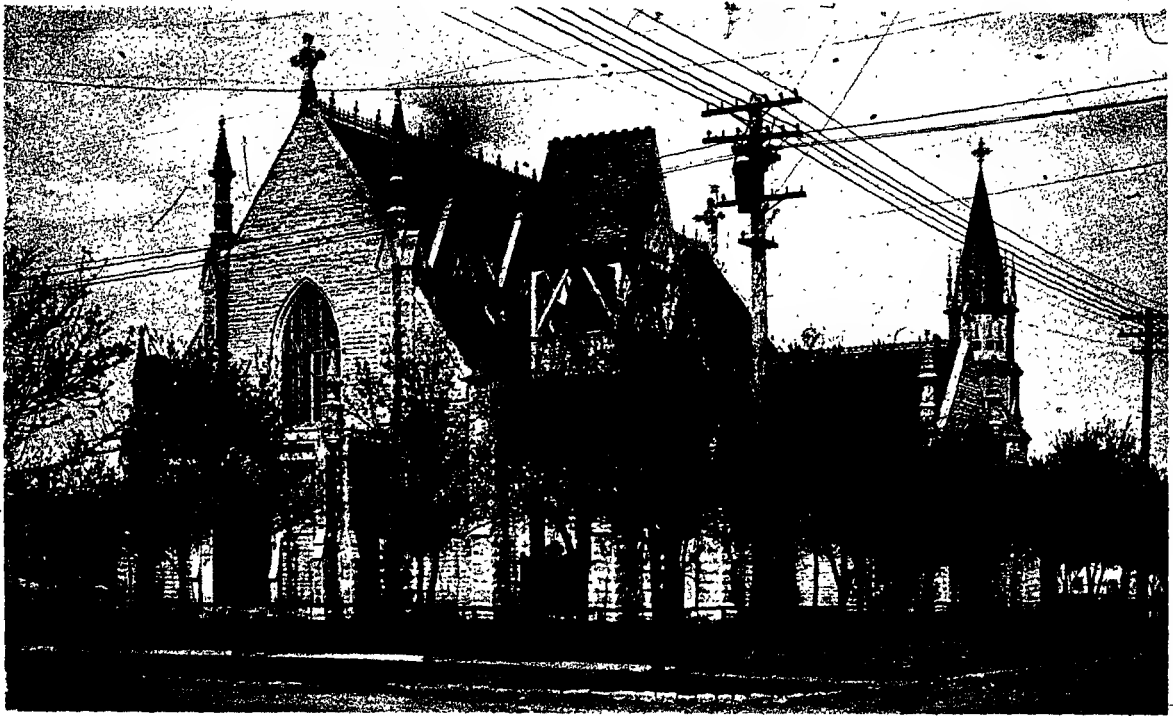
ASSINIBOINE PARK





CITY HALL.





HOLY TRINITY CHURCH



ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL

mopolitan in character and enjoying the advantages of every institution and invention of present times considered essential to the welfare, comfort and convenience of a progressive and cultured community.

Situated at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, the former stream giving access to the waterways of the north and northwest, and the latter to the vast plain region to the west, the site where Winnipeg now stands was first chosen by the Indians as a natural and convenient meeting place; and subsequently the fur-trading companies, discerning its commanding position, picked upon it for a central depot and distributing headquarters. This was away back in the days when the carrying on of trade was characterized by such conditions of hardship, adventure and armed conflict that the records of the companies engaged in traffic with the Indians have come to be styled the "romance of commerce." It is interesting to recall the steps by which the spot where Winnipeg stands has come to be persistently regarded as the center of the Northwest. The fact that the Assiniboine river, after meandering through the western prairies, joins the Red river at this point, became an object of interest one hundred years ago. The Assiniboine was the western artery by which the traders could bring their canoes and boats laden with furs to this point to be sent northward to Hudson's Bay and northward and eastward to Lake Superior, or southward to St. Paul, Minnesota. When the water of the stream was low its banks were so well drained that they afforded a highway by which the swamps and muskegs of the plains could be avoided. Accordingly in the first decade of the present century a Bourgeois of the North-West Trading company built at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers Fort Gibraltar as a halfway house between the Qu'Appelle and the mouth of the Winnipeg river, the highway by which the boat brigades came from and left for the east. Ten or eleven years after this Fort Douglas, the center of the colony founded by Lord Selkirk, was built a mile below Fort Gibraltar on the Red river. The center of the country thus seemed to be fixed, and in less than ten years more the wooden fort, called Fort Garry, was built a stone's throw from the site of Fort Gibraltar. Another decade and Governor Christie tried to check the stream of destiny, and erected at a distance of nearly twenty miles below the forks what still remains as lower Fort Garry. But it was useless to fight against fate, and four years afterward (1835) Fort Garry, a handsome fort 240 yards square, surrounded by a formidable stone wall with four strong stone bastions, was erected at the forks and remained, being also enlarged, until 1882, when



the Hudson's Bay Company, having moved into their new and magnificent establishment a block further north, the walls and bastions of the grim old landmark were demolished for the purpose of straightening the Main street approach to the Assiniboine river bridge, an act that was afterwards deeply deplored. The cannon with which the fort was mounted were presented to prominent citizens, and may be seen here and there ornamenting the lawns of private residences to-day. A generation ago within a mile from Fort Garry appeared the nucleus of the future city, in the little hamlet of Winnipeg, to which population began to gather. About the year 1878 the Mackenzie government of the Dominion attempted to build a railway bridge at Selkirk, twenty-five miles down the Red river, and to found a new metropolis; but it was not to be, and Winnipeg, the child of destiny, at the forks, continued to grow until she has now become the Fair Lady of the Plains.

Before proceeding with a description of Winnipeg it will not be amiss to interpolate a synopsis of the civil history of the Red river settlement, as the chief incidents associated therewith occurred in the immediate neighborhood of the city, and form a chapter in the history of the country that is but little known to the vast majority of the people who have taken up their homes here and is full of stirring episodes that will be read to-day with keen interest. To begin at the beginning of things, it may be recalled that in virtue of a charter granted in the year 1670 by King Charles the Second of Great Britain, the Hudson Bay Company was incorporated and endowed with certain rights and privileges in the territory described as Rupert's Land, consisting of the whole region whose waters flow into Hudson's Bay. It extended back from the Bay in its narrowest width on the east main coast about 200 miles, on the south about 300 miles toward Canada, while it attained its greatest breadth of more than 1200 miles on the western shore of the bay, whence the belt extended back toward the Rocky mountains, including within its limits the fertile valley of the Saskatchewan, whose waters fall into Lake Winnipeg, from which, by an outlet at its northeastern extremity they pass into streams emptying themselves into Hudson's Bay. The operations of the Company as a trading organization extend over a vast region other than those included in the ring above traced, but its proprietary rights and governing responsibilities under the charter were confined within the limits described. Until about 1774, being more than a century after the date of the charter, the Company does not appear to have extended its operations very far beyond the seacoast, the country west of which was a wilderness inhabited only by wild beasts and tribes of wandering savages.